

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After completing this module, you will have a working knowledge of:

- The community development process
- Planning steps in community development
- Methods for documenting the community need
- How to select ICDBG projects that can meet community needs and goals
- The ICDBG project team roles and responsibilities
- How to identify and engage strategic partners

A. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A successful community development process begins before grant writing starts and continues after a project has been completed. Community development begins by identifying current needs and current resources.

From these two pieces of information flow all efforts to address unmet needs, plan for the future and improve the quality of life of community members. Successful community development is built upon a foundation of community involvement followed by planning.

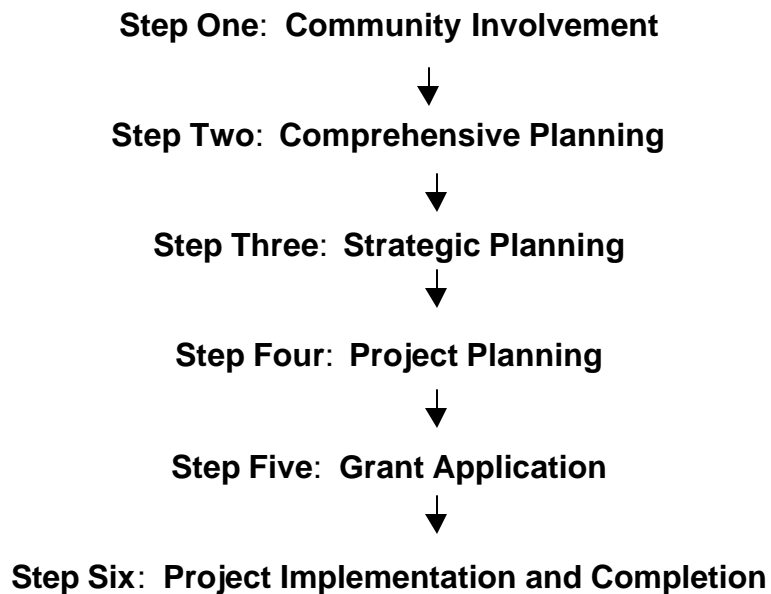
The result of this community involvement and planning is often called a comprehensive long range plan. A comprehensive long range plan is a document that provides an outline of the community's starting point and a map of desired changes to be made over a specific amount of time. Comprehensive long range plans should be adopted by the tribe's governing body through formal resolution. Upon adoption by the governing body, planners have direction to develop the strategic plan.

Communities with successful community development systems share the following features:

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- Community involvement and support
- Strong planning capacity
- Realistic goals
- Multiple approaches to achieve goals
- Strong organizational and management capacity
- Systems for overcoming obstacles
- Systems of accountability
- Partnerships and collaborations to meet goals
- Funding for projects

B. PLANNING STEPS IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



Step 1 - Community Involvement:

Community participation is critical to the process of identifying the communities' current and future needs as well as developing the plan to meet the needs. The tribe can select from a variety of information gathering methods to secure community participation. These methods include but are not limited to:

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- Community meetings
- Need surveys
- Interviews with key informants

Community participation helps ensure that all needs are accurately identified and existing resources within the community, including human resources, have been identified.

Community involvement is important, as it accomplishes many things, such as:

1. Creates a sense of community
2. Allows community members to play an active role in developing the strategy to address community needs
3. Establishes the direction and priority for utilization of existing resources and finding new resources to meet community needs

Community participation should be an on-going process separate and apart from grant writing efforts. Community involvement starts with identifying current needs and resources followed by planning for a better future. Prioritizing these needs, and identifying potential projects that will satisfy those needs, creates the outcomes that will be seen in the community.

Step 2 - Comprehensive Planning:

Comprehensive planning involves engaging the community in describing and prioritizing long-range goals (5-10 years) and the benchmarks to measure progress in achieving the goals. As part of the comprehensive planning process, community members often sort the identified needs into broad categories to be further defined in the strategic planning process. For example, “Health” may be a broad category of need during the comprehensive planning process. The category of “Health” could include individual health issues such as increasing levels of tuberculosis, public health issues such as outbreaks of water-borne illnesses, and mental health issues such as increasing levels of developmental disabilities due to lead poisoning. These specific health matters are further addressed in the strategic planning process.

Identifying community needs allows the tribe to establish goals. A goal is a broad statement of what the community hopes to accomplish in meeting its needs. Some community needs may require more than one goal to satisfy it.

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A goal is based on long-range planning and identified community needs. For example:

“To provide new housing opportunities for 50 % of our LMI community members who are without affordable housing.”

In order to accomplish this goal, the tribe potentially would need to:

- purchase land
- design new housing units and secure infrastructure support
- construct housing units,
- select LMI community members who will live in the new housing units

Establishing community goals requires interpreting the community's needs information into goal statements. Further, once goals can be stated, they should be prioritized, so that the tribe can develop a strategy to begin satisfying the most important goals first.

Step 3 - Strategic Planning:

Strategic Planning is the process by which the community builds on the comprehensive plan for movement toward the community's long-range vision. The resulting strategic plan identifies the goals and high-priority projects which can be pursued within the next five (5) years. Using the examples from Step 2, assume that the rising levels of tuberculosis were related to over crowded housing conditions. The tribe now has two inter-related areas to address (sub-standard housing conditions and increases in tuberculosis) that have been identified in the strategic plan.

It is from this strategic plan that projects are designed. Because the community has already determined its needs, goals and priorities, this information is ready for a project to address the identified needs.

Step 4 - Project Planning:

Once a project has been determined, a project plan can be developed which addresses a goal within the strategic plan. The project plan identifies all steps necessary to fulfill a need or set of needs, with identified timelines for completing these steps and outcome objectives from which the community can measure its success in implementing the project.

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The advantage to using the community development process in planning projects is it enables the community to refer to its comprehensive long range and strategic plans as the framework for all the projects necessary to meet its needs. By having a strategic plan, projects can be planned and developed quickly based on concrete documentation of need, not because a funding opportunity became available. In short, the project planning step enables the community to access appropriate resources quickly rather than building a project to fit the resources.

Step 5 – Grant Application

Care must be taken to select the grant opportunity that matches most closely to the community's needs and the projects identified by the tribe. Once the grant is written according to the application guidelines, the grant application can then serve as the footprint for the project.

Grantors may require grantees to meet a series of requirements. These will vary from grantor to grantor and may range from:

- Financial matching of funds
- Eligibility requirements for project participants
- Timeframe for completion of the project

The tribe must agree and be able to meet each of these requirements. If the tribe cannot meet the requirements of the grantor, continue searching for funding opportunities or find ways the tribe can meet these requirements in the future. It is better to find an appropriate fit between the tribe and the grantor than promise something that cannot be achieved.

Step 6 – Project Implementation and Completion

The successful project implementation and completion is also critical to the community development process. The meeting of community needs will not occur until the project is providing a service to community members in need.

Successful project implementation and completion will also impact the future funding of tribal projects.

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C. DOCUMENTING THE COMMUNITY NEED

Ideally, the tribe has already sought and received community involvement in determining its needs and resources, which are included in the comprehensive plan. Further, the high priority needs have been selected for inclusion within the tribal strategic plan. Therefore, as grant opportunities appear, the tribe can select which of the strategic plan needs will match with the goals of the granting agency.

It is important to document the prior steps taken to identify the community's needs as well as how and when the community was involved in the process. Documentation might include:

- Community surveys
- Minutes of community meetings
- Governing body resolution establishing community goals & priorities

Documentation can also include copies of printed data, such as:

- Comprehensive plans
- Strategic plans
- Indian housing plans
- Land-use plans
- Tribal statistical data on income, unemployment rates, or other data which supports the project need
- Statistical data from other agencies reinforcing community needs such as: I.H.S., school district, BIA, state or other appropriate data sources
- Letters of commitment of tribal resources for a community need (land)

The ICDBG program provides an excellent example of the need to document community involvement and community need.

24 CFR Section 1003.604 identifies the citizen participation requirements and methods for documenting this participation. The regulation requires the applicant to allow community members to examine and appraise the application. Applicants should follow their traditional means of resident involvement which at least includes the following:

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- Furnish residents with information concerning the amounts of funding available for proposed community development and housing activities and the range of activities which may be taken.
- Holding one or more meetings to obtain the views of residents on community development and housing needs. These meetings need to be scheduled in ways and times that will allow participation by residents.
- Develop and publish or post a Community Development Statement in a manner as to afford effected residents an opportunity to examine and to submit comments.
- Afford residents an opportunity to review and comment on the organization's performance on existing active ICDBG projects.

The applicant must certify that it has met the requirement for resident participation prior to submitting its application by using a Tribal resolution.

The resolution must state the following:

- The applicant has met the requirement for citizen participation
- The applicant has considered any resident's views or comments and modified the application accordingly if it deems it appropriate
- The applicant has made the modified application available to residents

Rating Factor 2: Need/Extent of the Problem requires that the ICDBG application include quantitative documentation that the project meets an essential community development need and the project benefits the neediest segment of the population.

While the ICDBG NOFA is very clear on documentation of community involvement and needs, not all funding agencies will provide the tribe such specific guidelines. Therefore, it is important to have the tribe's needs documented clearly and readily available for potential funding opportunities. A combination of qualitative data, such as that collected at community meetings, as well as quantitative data, such as that collected through surveys or past program evaluations, can provide a potential funder with a brief but distinct picture of the community's needs.

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D. SELECTING THE ICDBG TO MEET COMMUNITY GOALS

As the tribe is matching their identified goals to all funding options and selecting the best opportunity for funding the ICDBG program will always be at the top of the list. Since the ICDBG program focuses on the development of viable Indian and Alaska Native communities, it can be used to meet many community goals.

The tribe can select one or multiple projects to be included in one ICDBG application. Referring back to the example in Step 2 of Comprehensive Planning (Page 2-3), a tribe may wish to address the identified lead poisoning problem through an ICDBG project for housing rehabilitation, the waterborne illness problem through a public facilities and improvements project, and/or the tuberculosis problem through a new housing construction program. Additionally, there may be additional funding through other funding agencies that the tribe could use to leverage an ICDBG.

In designing the project, funding availability must be factored into the decision. The total cost of *all* activities cannot exceed the grant ceiling limit established for your Area ONAP. In Fiscal Year 2004 the funding limits were:

AREA	GRANT CEILING
Eastern/Woodlands	500,000
Southern Plains	800,000
Northern Plains	900,000
Northwest	500,000
Alaska	500,000
Southwest Population: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50,001+• 10,501-50,000• 7,501 – 10,500• 6,001 – 7,500• 1,501 – 6,000• 1 – 1,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5,500,0002,750,0002,200,0001,100,000825,000605,000

Note that the Area ONAP grant funding ceilings are fixed amounts for each tribe or tribal organization regardless of its size except in the Southwest Area ONAP.

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For the Southwest Area ONAP jurisdiction, the population used to determine ceiling amounts is the Native American population that resides on a reservation or rancheria. Southwest area tribes and tribal organizations should contact the Area ONAP office if they are unsure of the population level to use to determine the ceiling amount for your tribe or if you believe that the level used for previous years needs to be revised or corrected. The Southwest ONAP must approve any corrections or revisions to Native American population data before you submit your application. Always refer to the NOFA for the current funding ceiling.

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY TWO COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

List up to three (3) needs which have been identified by your community that would directly impact LMI community members:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Describe how the community was involved in identifying the needs:

List the other methods used to document the needs:

Write a goal that addresses the identified needs:

Describe an ICDBG project which will move the community closer to achieving the goal:

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY TWO (Continued)

COMMUNITY NEED & PROJECT IDENTIFICATION

Identify The Type of Project Selected: _____

- ☐ Housing Rehabilitation
- ☐ Land Acquisition
- ☐ New Housing Construction
- ☐ Homeownership Assistance
- ☐ Public Facility/Improvement
- ☐ Economic Development
- ☐ Microenterprise
- ☐ Other _____

Describe the benefits that LMI community members will receive from the project:_____

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E. ESTABLISHING PROJECT TEAM'S ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES

It is important to establish your project team as early in the grant conception phase as possible. The number of people on the team will depend upon the following variables:

- Nature, size and complexity of the project
- Amount of experience and level of expertise within the tribe
- Availability of time to commit to the project

Team members should be selected to represent the following areas of project development and management:

- Project planning
- Project management
- Financial management
- Staffing coordination
- Governing body communication
- Grant writing
- Project outcomes

Project Role	Who	Responsibilities
Project planning	Planning Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assists in the planning of the project• Ensures the project addresses the community's overall needs and goals
Project management	Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Manages all elements of the funded project
Financial management	Finance Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develops the project budget• Manages receipt and distribution of all funds• Supervises project procurement activities• Submits all financial reports

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Project Role	Who	Responsibilities
Staffing coordination	Human Resources Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in the development of the staffing pattern for the project • Ensures timely hiring of project staff • Ensures appropriate use of existing staff for the project
Governing body communication	Community Manager or Department Director responsible for reporting to the governing body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides regular up-dates on project status
Grant writing	Grant Writer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and/or secures all documents required with grant application and submission • May be involved with project implementation
Project outcomes	Community Manager or appropriate Department Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that the grant application has realistic outcomes • Designs and implements the evaluation protocol and manages the evaluation activities to document project outcomes

Team composition may vary depending upon the project. An early identification of the project team members and a commitment from the members will support the successful completion of the project.

F. STRATEGIC PARTNERS

To successfully plan, implement and manage a project might require securing strategic partners to support the effort. A strategic partner is an individual, tribal department, organization, or other group who will bring specific resources to the project.

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Strategic partners can be used to provide a skill or resource that the tribe does not have. These resources may be either financial or human resource assets. A financial resource might be cash or financial accounting service. Human resources might be expertise in performing project activities necessary for the successful completion of the project.

An example of the use of strategic partners includes:

- If the tribe has limited project management experience, identify a strategic partner with extensive experience to assist in the project management. Not only will this strengthen the project but it can increase the capacity of the tribe in project management.
- If the tribe has had negative audit findings, identify a strategic partner who will provide an independent review of the financial activities until the negative audit issues are resolved.
- If the tribe does not have experience in evaluating the project outcomes, seek a strategic partner with experience to add to the team.

Using strategic partners can help a tribe strengthen its management of a project and develop internal capacity of the tribe.

G. SUMMARY

Completing the planning steps in community development is critical to project success. These steps ensure that there is documented community involvement in identifying the needs of the community. This identification is the basis for long-term or comprehensive planning, which identifies long-term changes to occur over the course of five to 10 years. Comprehensive planning leads to strategic planning, which identifies more critical changes to be addressed over a shorter period of time, usually three to five years. Project planning allows a tribe to identify one or more of the strategic planning goals and match this project(s) to the parameters and the funds available from funding sources as they become available.

Each of the steps in project planning is necessary to move a project(s) from concept to reality. As part of the project planning process, identifying a project

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team and establishing each team member's role and responsibilities is a necessary planning task.

An initial self-evaluation of the project's scope, the internal capacity and resources of the tribe may result in seeking a strategic partner which can add expertise and resources to the project as well as help in presenting a strong, experienced team to a potential funding agency.

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PARTICIPANT WORK ACTIVITY THREE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS AND STRATEGIC PARTNERS

For the project identified in participant activity two identify potential team members:

Area of Expertise	Name	Department
Project Planning	_____	_____
Project Management	_____	_____
Financial Management	_____	_____
Staffing Coordination	_____	_____
Governing Body Communication	_____	_____
Grant Writing	_____	_____
Project Outcomes	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

For the project identified in participant activity two identify potential strategic partners and how they will contribute to the project:

Potential Strategic Partner	Project Role
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

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